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## FLORIDA HEALTH IN BAY RECOGNIZES DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH



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**PANAMA CITY, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health in Bay County, DOH-Bay, recognizes November as Diabetes Awareness Month, a month set aside every year to raise awareness about diabetes and promote the importance of taking steps to confront diabetes as a critical health issue. The theme for this year is *Diabetes: Protect Your Family*. The goal is to raise awareness of the impact that diabetes has on the family and support network of those affected, and promoting the role of the family in management, care, prevention, and education of diabetes.

“Families should learn about diabetes warning signs and check their risk of developing type 2 diabetes”, said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, DOH-Bay Administrator/Health Officer. “There is a great need for education and awareness to help people spot the warning signs of diabetes early.”

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled in the last 20 years in the U.S. In Florida, it is estimated that over 2.4 million people have diabetes and over 5.8 million have prediabetes. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in Florida.

There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant). Women with diabetes have more difficulty conceiving and may have poor pregnancy outcomes, so it is especially important for women to be aware of their risk factors for developing diabetes, including having a family history of diabetes as well as age, weight, and physical activity level.

Due to better treatments, people with diabetes are now living longer—and with a better quality of life—than ever before. Healthy lifestyles can also reduce the impact that diabetes may have on your life. A blood test from your health care provider can determine if you have diabetes. Early treatment can prevent serious problems diabetes can cause, such as loss of eyesight or kidney damage.

When your blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes you may be at risk for prediabetes. Prediabetes is a serious health condition that increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Eighty-six million American adults have prediabetes. Nine out of 10 people with prediabetes don’t know they have it. Fortunately, making healthy lifestyle choices can

delay or prevent type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems. A simple blood sugar test to find out if you have prediabetes. Talk to your health care provider if you should be tested.

DOH-Bay offers accredited Diabetes Self-Management Education classes that are covered by many insurance options. In addition, we have the National Diabetes Prevention Program available for those who have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes or who are at-risk for diabetes. Risk factors include; having a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth, having gestational diabetes, being overweight or obese, and being physically inactive. Your risks also increase with age and certain races are more susceptible to diabetes. These classes are also often covered under insurance plans.

To learn more about diabetes prevention and self-management, visit [www.floridahealth.gov/diabetes](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diabetes)

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